

Adriaan van Eeghen 1631- 1709

Eeghem, Adriaan van (1631-1709)

Adriaan van Eeghem (Eeghen), a member of the large van Eeghen family, born 14 June 1631 at Cortemarck, Flanders, died 24 May 1709, at [Middelburg](#). As a boy he was a Catholic priest's attendant at Mass. Adriaan went to Haarlem, [Holland](#), to learn weaving, and was baptized into the [Flemish Mennonite](#) congregation there on 17 March 1652. In 1653 he settled in Middelburg, Dutch province of [Zeeland](#), and began to preach there on 21 March 1655. He opened a book business, learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, became a competent theologian, and wrote the first Mennonite systematic theology, *De Christelijke Godgeleerdheid*, printed posthumously in 1711. In 1658 he debated with the Quaker Frijkes Emble after the sermon in Vlissingen.

Joost Isenbaart, the elder of Middelburg, on 3 December 1659, accused his colleagues Adriaan van Eeghem and Pieter Baart of unorthodoxy on the [Incarnation](#) and the Trinity. When Baart moved to Vlissingen in 1663, three new preachers were chosen, one of them being Thomas van Eeghem, Adriaan's nephew (died 28 July 1693). Soon afterward the [Galenist](#) dissension broke out in Zeeland. Isenbaart now brought suit against his colleagues. Adriaan was summoned before the magistrate. In the presence of Thomas van Eeghem, he declared that he believed in the eternity of Christ, that Adam's sin was not only for himself and Christ's death was not only for Himself. He refused to sign the [12 Utrecht Articles](#). This was followed by a debate with [Samuel Apostool](#) of [Amsterdam](#). The government forbade him to preach any longer until he promised not to preach contrary to the 12 questions (19 December 1655). Isenbaart died in 1673. In 1701 Adriaan was attacked by the Reformed preacher on account of his book, *De Wet der Nature*.

For his preaching Adriaan received nothing but a rent-free home. He refused a call to Rotterdam. He continued his service into his advanced old age, and preached a sermon one week before his death at the age of nearly 78. He was married three times: to Janneke Willems 1656-1678, Martijntje Goudesebois 1680-1684, and Petronella Haijs 1702 until his death. He had no children. He wrote several books, which were published at Middelburg by Michiel van Hoekke: *Verhandeling van de stemmelijke gebeden in de vergaderinge der geloovigen* (1685), in which he showed himself to be a determined opponent of "silent prayer"; *Catechismus ofte onderwyzinge in de Kristelijke Godsdienst* (1687), reprinted in 1715; *Korte Catechismus* (1691); *Verhandeling van de Wet der Nature* (1701). This last book had an appendix: an answer to several questions; notes on the first 18 verses of the Gospel of John; may those who are not members of the church come to communion? (He answered it negatively.) This book was reprinted in 1731 by Gerardus de Wind, who had previously edited and published a manuscript left by Adriaan: *De Christelijke Godgeleerdheid* (1711). It has about 650 pages, and is divided into five books: the Scriptures, God's name, qualities and works, God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the new covenant, and the Christian church or the congregation of the new covenant. Gerardus de Wind also wrote a funeral sermon on Adriaan's death.

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